

PINAL AIRPARK MASTER PLAN

Prepared for the
County of Pinal

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INTRODUCTION

Chapter One INTRODUCTION

The Pinal Airpark Master Plan has been undertaken by Pinal County, Arizona, to determine the existing and future role of the airport, and to provide direction for future airport development for the planning period from 1992 through 2011. The Plan was funded with a 95 percent grant from the Arizona Department of Transportation, Aeronautics Division, with the remaining 5 percent participation provided by Pinal County. The Plan is being prepared by the airport consulting firm of SFC Engineering of Phoenix, Arizona.

The development of the Master Plan is in response to the growing demands being placed upon Pinal Airpark, as well as the desire to establish a firm direction for the facility's future operation. The existing Evergreen Air Center lease agreement provided direction for the development which has occurred over the last fifteen years or longer. However, with substantial changes affecting the Pinal Airpark since the last renegotiation of the Airpark lease, it is necessary to re-evaluate earlier recommendations and look forward through the next twenty years to determine what will be required to accommodate the needs of the Airpark and County.

The demands point to the need to evaluate the short-, medium-, and long-range facility requirements and to determine the best possible location for future Airpark improvements. In addition, other questions have evolved in recent years concerning the future role of the Airpark and the adequacy of the existing facilities to accommodate and attract business-related aviation activity. This Master Plan has been designed and developed to address these questions and provide a realistic development program for the Airpark. The term "realistic" must be stressed at this point, since recommendations to be developed later in this study will be based on a number of considerations related to projected future aviation demands and expected financial resources available to the Airpark.

This Master Plan Update is evidence that Pinal County recognizes the importance of aviation in the southern part of Pinal County and also its relationship to the rest of Southern Arizona. It also recognizes the importance of aviation in community planning and the associated challenges inherent in providing for future aviation needs. The cost of maintaining and developing an airport is an investment which may yield impressive long-term benefits for a community. With a sound and realistic Master Plan, Pinal Airpark will increase its role as both an economic asset and a source of pride to the residents of the area and all of Pinal County.

STUDY APPROACH

The primary objective of the Pinal Airpark Master Plan is to produce a long-term development program which will yield a safe, efficient, economical, and environmentally acceptable air transportation facility for the community. The accomplishment of this objective requires an evaluation of the Airpark and a determination of what actions should

be taken in the future to maintain an adequate, safe, and reliable airport facility to meet the aviation needs of Pinal County and the Southern Pinal County area. The completed Master Plan will provide a step-by-step (phased) outline of the recommended developments, and give responsible officials advance notice of pending needs to aid in future scheduling and budgeting. This allows for orderly and timely development of the Airpark. To accomplish the objectives of this study, the Master Plan will:

- Inventory and analyze data pertinent to the Airpark and its environs.
- Collect and analyze general economic factors and evaluate the area's aviation activity.
- Forecast aviation activity through the year 2010.
- Determine Airpark facility requirements and their feasibility.
- Investigate alternatives to meet the Airpark facility needs.
- Prepare an airport layout plan and land-use plan for the Airpark and its surrounding areas.
- Schedule priorities, phase proposed developments, and estimate development costs.

AIRPORT USERS

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) currently defines the following three broad categories of aviation activity: general aviation, certified air carrier, and military.

General aviation includes every type of civil flying other than the certified air carriers; consequently, the system is characterized by a relatively low profile, although a high percentage of the nation's daily operations are of the general aviation category. General aviation falls into four major categories:

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| Business - | The use of an aircraft for executive or business transportation. This includes aircraft used by an organization and operated by professional pilots to transport its employees and property (not for individual compensation or hire); and aircraft used by an individual for transportation required for business purposes. |
| Commercial - | The use of an aircraft for commercial purposes (other than regional and air carrier), including: air taxi—involving any use of an aircraft by the holder of an air taxi operating certificate; aerial application—such as crop dusting; special industrial usage—such as logging, advertising, and photography; and emergency use. |

Instructional - The use of an aircraft for flight training under an instructor's supervision.

Personal - The use of an aircraft for a variety of personal reasons.

General aviation is the largest and, in many ways, the most significant element of the national air transportation system, constituting 98 percent of all aircraft in use today. In 1983 the scheduled airlines served 472 airports in the United States, and today there is access to over 15,000 general aviation airports in the nation.

Commercial service carriers are those airlines which provide scheduled carriage of passengers and/or freight and are licensed by the FAA. The nearest scheduled commercial air service to the local market is Tucson International Airport, located approximately 30 miles southeast of Pinal Airpark. Pinal Airpark, even though it does not have scheduled air carrier or regional air service, does serve commercial aviation far more than the general aviation industry. Evergreen International, Inc. (an owner of Evergreen Air Center, the Fixed Base Operator on the Airpark), provides aircraft and maintenance and support services to the commercial passenger and cargo industry from Pinal Airpark. General aviation activity is not a major part of the Airpark's operational or revenue base.

Military activity at the Airpark consists of the Arizona Army National Guard and the Department of Defense (DOD) Special Operations Training activity. The based military aviation on the Airpark is currently the predominant flight activity at the facility. Both the Army National Guard and the DOD are planning on expanding their respective facilities and operations within the next few years. These organizations will continue to play a major role in the future of Pinal Airpark.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The approach to be used in this Master Plan study includes an extensive public involvement process, through the use of a Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) and Public Meetings. The basic role of the Pinal Airpark Planning Advisory Committee is to review the plans and proposals of the Consultant, provide local knowledge and expertise, and assist in developing a final Airport Master Plan which successfully addresses the long-term needs of the Airpark and county.

During the course of the study, the Consultant prepared an Interim Report and a Draft Master Plan Report. The reports were submitted to the PAC to allow members an opportunity to review and evaluate the results and conclusions of the work. This set the stage for PAC and public informational meetings, which provided the forum for comment and review. This ongoing process gave all concerned a voice in the proceedings, maintained a good exchange of information, and ensured that a realistic and effective Master Plan was developed for the Airpark.

The general public played a role in the study process through the Public Meetings. These meetings were scheduled at strategic points in the study—subsequent to the issuance of the Interim Report and the Draft Master Plan Report. At each meeting, the Consultant team discussed how the project was progressing, what the expected activity demand was for the Airpark, and what alternatives were being considered. Representatives from the Arizona Department of Transportation, Aeronautics Division (ADOT); Pinal County; and Evergreen Air Center also attended these meetings.